

Inside RAP



Resettlement Assistance Program Evaluation Report

CIC released an Evaluation Report of the Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) in November 2011. The evaluation addressed issues related to program relevance, design and impact, and focused on the reference period of FY 2005/2006 to FY 2009/2010 (or annual data from 2005 to 2009).

By examining both programs simultaneously, the evaluation investigated the refugee experience from selection and processing overseas to settlement in Canada.

Major findings associated with RAP:

- RAP is consistent with UNHCR guidelines on providing immediate assistance to newly arriving refugees
- Refugee needs for support services have likely increased following the introduction of IRPA
- Quality of matching GARs to communities is appropriate, although secondary migration occurs
- GARs report a high level of satisfaction with service provided
- Concerns with respect to RAP revolve around housing, medical needs, level of income support and flexibility in program delivery
- Longitudinal analysis of GAR outcomes highlights the difficulties faced by GAR clients in Canada

Three overall recommendations associated with RAP:

- Modify programming to reflect changing needs of GAR clients
- Address the issue of the adequacy of income and housing supports
- Enhance information sharing

Thanks to everyone who took part in the evaluation exercise. Your participation in stakeholder interviews, case studies, and surveys was most appreciated. You are encouraged to visit the CIC website to read the full report:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/gar-rap/index.asp>

RAP is a federally funded program that provides financial and integration assistance to newly arrived government-assisted refugees. This program has enabled the successful resettlement of thousands of refugees to Canada.

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What's New?

- **RAP Service Provider ISS of BC produces GAR Youth Pre-departure Orientation Pilot Report:** Visit ISS of BC's website to learn about the pre-departure orientation pilot program targeted towards Bhutanese youth who are currently in Nepal awaiting resettlement to Canada with their parents-guardians.

<http://www.issbc.org/sites/default/files/publications/a-new-start.pdf>

- **Refugee Resettlement Videos:** CIC has developed two new resettlement videos. The first video highlights why resettling refugees is important and the second focuses on the difference we can make in a refugee's life and how they will contribute to Canada. These videos are available on the CIC website under Journey to Canada: Stories of Refugees

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/departement/media/multimedia/index.asp>



"Welcome Circle" at Wesley Urban Ministries in Hamilton.
Learn more about our new RAP service provider on page 5.



RAP Quiz

Whether you are new to RAP or have been working in the Program for many years, take the RAP quiz and test your knowledge.

1. In what year did RAP begin?
2. What CIC program supported government-assisted refugees (GARs) before RAP existed?
3. In how many communities across Canada is RAP delivered?
4. What city receives the most GARs per year (800)?
5. What city receives the least GARs per year (44)?
6. In what year was life skills/enhanced orientation incorporated nationally into existing RAP services?
7. True or False: GAR couples can arrive in Canada with up to \$7,500 dollars without affecting the amount of RAP income support they can receive?
8. What were the top 3 countries of birth of RAP recipients who arrived in Canada during 2005 to 2009?
9. What percentage of GARs who arrived in Canada between 2005-2009 were adults?
A) 45%, B) 57%, C) 53%
10. Canada resettles the second highest number of refugees in the world. Which country resettles the most?

Answers:

1) 1998, 2) Adjustment Assistance Program, 3) 23, 4) Vancouver, 5) Prince Albert, 6) 2006, 7) True, 8) Afghanistan, Iraq and Myanmar (Burma), 9) B 57%, 10) United States

RAP Staff Receive CIC Deputy Minister Award

Congratulations to the RAP Computer-Based Training Course Development Team for receiving a 2011 Deputy Minister's Achievement Award for Service Excellence.

On September 1, 2010, the Integration Program Management Branch launched a national computer-based training course for new and experienced CIC RAP officers.

The training was developed by a design team consisting of regional representatives from the Atlantic, Ontario, Prairies and Northern Territories as well as British Columbia and Yukon regions, along with an Integration Program Management Branch lead, and advisors from the Learning and Development Division, Human Resources Branch. Members included: Louis Beauchamp, Fiona Corbin, Darlene Côté, Piers Drew, Stephanie Griffiths, Emay Ko, Tsering Nanglu, Bridgette Slobodian, Olivette Trudel and Betty Zangari.

With the release of the computer-based training in September 2010, each CIC officer and local supervisor in the program now has access to the training to support their day-to-day work administering RAP income support.

This allows for a degree of national consistency that goes above and beyond what would otherwise have been obtained through a manual release alone.

Initial feedback from local CIC officers—whether experienced or new—who have completed the training has been very positive.



RAP CBT Design Team Members at the CIC Deputy Minister Achievement Award Ceremony in Ottawa.

Promising Practices: Search for Permanent Accommodation

Enhanced opportunity for RAP related information sharing is a key recommendation in the 2011GAR-RAP Evaluation Report. With that in mind, CIC recently asked RAP Service Provider Organizations to share their promising practices in the search for permanent accommodations, an often challenging task given fixed RAP income and low vacancy rates across Canada. Thanks to the organizations below for sharing their local practices with RAP service providers across Canada

Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County Windsor, ON

Benefits of Positive Relationships:

We have developed a positive rapport with many landlords, building managers, and management companies throughout the community. This is beneficial for our clients as the working relationship that we have fostered allows for flexibility in tenancy agreements. Clients are not required to have or provide their Social Insurance Number, previous address history or proof of income. This positive working relationship does not define how we conduct our search; rather, it assists us in providing the client with a smoother transition if that accommodation is chosen. It allows for negotiations over fixed rates, rent to comply with budget, and short term lease agreements.

Informed Decisions:

A best practice for choosing permanent accommodations is an informed choice. We attempt to provide the client with the most helpful information and observations so that they are able to make the best possible informed decision when selecting their accommodations. The client is informed of the RAP case manager's opinion as to the condition of each dwelling they view and whether they meet, are below or above standard. The client is instructed to consider the condition of the following:

- Overall appearance and cleanliness
- Windows (locks, quality and age)
- Basic plumbing
- Kitchen appliances (stove, oven, fridge)
- Insulation (furnace)
- Room size
- Working smoke detector
- Possible dangers (exposed wires)

Maintain a Database:

To ensure that the accommodations being shown are suitable for the client, we keep an extensive database of accommodations rented in the past, so that accommodating landlords are utilized again and the more difficult ones are avoided.

Catholic Immigration Centre, Ottawa, ON

Assess Expectations:

One of the barriers faced by the housing team is clients' perception of housing standards in Canada. A housing orientation/workshop allows clients to be shown the reality of housing situations and housing issues faced by low income Canadians. Clients are urged to consider their first home as short term accommodation. Their life in Canada is not all bleak, as time progresses, newcomers' living standard should improve. Canada is indeed a land of opportunities, times and commitment to hard works will bring more comfortable life in the future. When clients' have realistic expectations and look at their future with a brighter outlook, they and the housing workers have less stress during the housing search.

Smooth Transactions with Partners:

Organizing for smooth transactions with partners brings many benefits. Using a letter of introduction with a client's bank, working with the local CIC to ensure speedy production of rent cheques, working with landlords for agreement to hold a unit, and working with the client to cooperate in getting all things done in time are all strategies to help ensure things run more smoothly.

Good Relationship with Local CIC:

Respect and cooperate with each other as team players in delivering RAP. The well-being of clients are the ultimate goal for both parties. Have regular meetings and open lines of communication for the improvement of the program delivery.





Promising Practices continued...

Reception House - Waterloo Region Kitchener, ON

Landlord Relationships:

We attempt to build nurturing and open relationships with landlords in our region. We have held open houses with landlords and invite them to attend our social functions to show them the work that we do. We want to be transparent with them and include them in the work that we do to settle refugees in our area.

Media Partners:

We use our media partners as an important resource. On the editorial side, we speak to city editors about needs that we have and then meet with reporters about the issues. These stories appear in the local section or on the front page of the paper and raise awareness about our needs. We have also relied on classified advertising requesting a need for housing.

Networking:

We network with other agencies such as The Working Centre, Kitchener Housing and HUGG sharing our needs and speaking with workers about potential housing opportunities. Some other options include transition housing such as Welcome Home which provides temporary housing for up to a year for refugees or new Canadians. Also, on occasion we rely on boarding houses for temporary accommodation.

Catholic Social Services Edmonton, AB

Search Before Arrival:

When we first receive the Notice of Arrivals (the document that provides details of GAR arrivals, including family size and the number of adults and children), our Housing Specialist begins to search for rental vacancies through landlord connections and relationships and online searches that will be suitable for the family, keeping in mind the family composition and the approved monthly RAP subsidy they will receive.

Consider Client Preferences:

•To ensure the best possible housing match is made for the family (i.e., housing that is safe, accessible and affordable within the RAP budget allocation), the family is asked if they have a preferred neighbourhood. Many GARs with relatives or friends in Edmonton or who have prior knowledge about the city indicate that they want to live near family members or friends. We also advise the GARS that during their stay at Reception House, we will show them two housing options from which they can choose.

2011 GAR Arrivals

Most of the RAP SPOs and CIC officers are already well aware of the high number of arrivals in November and December of 2011. All GAR-receiving centres have been asked to not only support high volumes of arrivals, but also to show as much flexibility as possible to accommodate cases that either arrive after the usual December 15th annual cut-off date or fall outside of normal arrival times (e.g., weekend arrivals).

While "late in the calendar year arrivals" are not a new phenomenon, 2011 has seen a particularly high number of heavily clustered arrivals. CIC's Matching Centre does its utmost to manage the flow of arrivals to various cities, but are limited in their destining flexibility by cases with family links already in Canada and do not have any control over arrival dates. In addition, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has to try and make travel arrangements for GARs at a busy time of year for air travel.

CIC recognizes the impacts and pressures this puts on the dedicated frontline staff delivering services and providing income support to our government-assisted refugee clients, and would like to thank all RAP SPO and CIC staff for their continued commitment to providing the needed supports to our GAR clients.

We are committed to working together with our internal and external partners in the delivery of Canada's refugee resettlement program to try and better manage the flow of GAR arrivals throughout the year in 2012 and in future years.

Family Configurations and Special Needs:

For single GARs, we try and connect them with another single GAR so that they can share accommodation and the cost. For clients with physical disabilities, we have built relationships with managers of accessible facilities, in order to try and minimize the wait time for suites. Similarly, we have also tried to cultivate relationships with landlords of multi-room residences and apartments to secure or locate larger units.

Wesley Urban Ministries Welcomes Refugees to Hamilton!

Wesley Urban Ministries has been serving the Greater Hamilton Ontario community since 1955, ever evolving to meet the changing needs of those we serve. Wesley provides programs and service to all ages; from infants to seniors through our thirty programs, all of which are designed to meet the needs of every segment of our population. We support homeless youth and adults, provide programs for children and teens, multi-cultural seniors, families and single mothers and government sponsored refugees. Our programs are designed to support and encourage independence in all those we serve – a hand-up, as is our motto!

Wesley Urban Ministries has strategically placed our Outreach Programs in neighbourhoods that have the highest populations of poverty. We have adapted the programs to the needs of the individuals and families that live in these neighbourhoods.

We are excited to serve new refugees coming to Canada, through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) and Client Support Services (CSS) Program. The many other programs at Wesley Urban Ministries provide an opportunity for our new neighbours to take advantage of additional services that will be very helpful as they settle in their new home.

Our creative RAP and CSS team has developed a 'Welcome Circle' for each new group that arrives in Canada, a celebration and reception to help make them feel at home.

The 'Welcome Circle' is a fun and interactive opportunity for our community to meet and greet the newly arrived refugees. Although language may be a barrier, laughter and smiles are universal.

Daljit Garry, Executive Director of Wesley Urban Ministries, was on hand to greet our new residents at a recent 'Welcome Circle' and commented, "The outpouring of gratitude and thanks from these folks was heartwarming". "Knowing that their journey to find a new life was long and difficult made this welcome all the more special".



Wesley Urban Ministries "Welcome Circle", a celebration and reception to help make new resettled refugees feel at home.

The Client Support Services (CSS) provides continued support to the recently arrived refugees after the Resettlement Assistance Program ensures they have fulfilled the initial needs of our new community members. CSS is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and offers client-centered supports for up to one year if needed. Our goal is to ensure a positive experience to these newly arrived folks in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

We invite everyone to visit Wesley Urban Ministries at www.wesleyurbanministries.ca to learn more about our work!



**Stay tuned for the next issue of Inside RAP.
Feel free to contact us, we appreciate your feedback and suggestions!
rap.newsletter@cic.gc.ca**